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What Can Physical Activity Do for Me?

Lori Rice
University of Kentucky

Jackie Walters
University of Kentucky, jackie.walters@uky.edu

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What Can Physical Activity Do for Me?

Physical activity can lower your risk of:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Colon cancer

How Much Physical Activity Do I Need?

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services physical activity guidelines for Americans, adults need 30 minutes of physical activity on five or more days of the week. This physical activity should be at the moderate intensity level and in addition to normal daily activities. The 30 minutes may be divided into sessions of at least 10 minutes each. For example, take a 10 minute walk in the morning, at lunch and in the evening.

Activity Level (Intensity)

Low intensity	You should be able to talk to a friend easily without being out of breath.
Moderate intensity	Breathing rate should increase slightly. You won't be able to have a full conversation.
High intensity	Breathing rate is increased. You are only able to speak a few words at a time.

How Can I Get Started?

Fancy clothes and equipment are not needed. However, proper shoes can protect you from getting hurt. Choose a shoe designed for the exercise you plan to do.

If you don't go to the doctor regularly, or if you are unsure of your health status, it is a good idea to see a doctor before beginning an exercise program. Think about the following questions. If you answer "yes" to any of them, you should consult your doctor before beginning:

Question	Yes	No
Are you a man over age 40 or a woman over age 50?		
Have you been told that you have heart trouble?		
Do you experience chest pains?		
Do you often feel faint or dizzy?		
Do you have arthritis or another bone or joint problem that might be aggravated by improper exercise?		
Do you have high blood pressure?		
Do you have diabetes?		
Has it been more than a year since you were in a physical activity routine?		
Are you pregnant?		
Do you have asthma?		
Do you have a body mass index (BMI) greater than 30?		

If you do not know your BMI, you can find it using the chart at the end of this fact sheet.

What Kind of Physical Activity Should I Do?

For best health, participate in activities from each of these groups.		
Cardiovascular (Healthy Heart)	Resistance/Endurance (Muscle Strength)	Flexibility (Range of Motion)
Increases the heart rate for a longer period of time.	Works the muscles against a force	Moves joints through their full range of motion.
Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart health • Burns calories for weight loss or maintenance • Reduces risk of chronic disease 	Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes muscles stronger • Tones the body 	Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of movement • Improves ability of the elderly to maintain independence
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking • Bicycling, either stationary or outdoor • Dancing • Group exercise (chair aerobics, low impact aerobics) • Climbing stairs • Vigorous yard work (lawn mowing, raking, pruning) 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting homemade weights (milk jugs filled with water, canned foods) • Using exercise bands or tubes • Using body weight (push-ups, chair sits, stomach curls) • Lifting free weights (dumbbells) • Using weight machines (most often found in a fitness center or gym) • Group exercise classes or videos (muscle conditioning) 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretching after doing exercise • Classes such as yoga, pilates, martial arts
30 minutes on five or more days of the week	Twice per week, skipping one day between workouts	Daily, or at least three days per week

Balance Calories In With Calories Out

Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight by burning extra calories you eat. Look at the chart below for ideas about how to burn extra calories.

Activity	Calories used in 30 minutes	
	MALE (175 lbs)	FEMALE (135 lbs)
Leisure walking	146	113
Biking, 12-14 mph	334	258
Dancing	188	145
Light housecleaning	104	81
Mowing lawn (hand mower)	251	193

Stay Motivated

- Choose activities that you enjoy.
- Choose a safe location nearby.
- Be active with a friend or family member.
- Choose a time that works best for you.
- Set short-term goals and write them down.
- Set your own pace. Start slowly and progress gradually.
- Be creative and have fun!

Sources

Adapted from University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service “Get Moving Kentucky!” publications Starting Safely, and Making Physical Activity Work for You

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Nutrition and Physical Activity. “When is a Medical Evaluation Necessary?” available online at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/starting/medical_evaluation.htm

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Nutrition and Physical Activity, Physical Activity Pages, available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm>

What's Your BMI?

To use the table, find the appropriate height in the left-hand column labeled Height. Move across to a given weight (in pounds). The number at the top of the column is the BMI at that height and weight. Pounds have been rounded off.

	Normal						Overweight					Obese			Extremely Obese			
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	35	39	40	41	42	43
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																	
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	167	186	191	196	201	205
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	173	193	198	203	208	212
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	179	199	204	209	215	220
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	185	206	211	217	222	227
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	191	213	218	224	229	235
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	197	220	225	231	237	242
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	204	227	232	238	244	250
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	210	234	240	246	252	258
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	216	241	247	253	260	266
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	223	249	255	261	268	274
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	230	256	262	269	276	282
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	236	263	270	277	284	291
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	207	243	271	278	285	292	299
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	250	279	286	293	301	308
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	258	287	294	302	309	316
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	265	295	302	310	318	325
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	272	303	311	319	326	334
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	279	311	319	327	335	343
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	287	320	328	336	344	353

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.htm

Lori Rice, MS, CN, Former Extension Associate for Health Education through Extension Leadership (HEEL) Program

Jackie Walters, MBA, RD, LD Extension Specialist for Nutrition Education Programs

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